

The Watershed Management Project

In order to promote watershed management in the Lower Mekong Basin, the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany agreed in 2002 to jointly establish the **Watershed Management Project**. The project has an overall duration of 10 years in 3 phases. The **Overall Objective** of the project is:

Planning and coordination of sustainable management of resources in watersheds by selected relevant organisations of the four Lower Mekong Basin riparian countries are improved at national and regional levels.

The project is active in three main areas:

- Policy Analysis and Advice
- Information and Knowledge Management
- Capacity Building

Policy Analysis and Advice: The project supports the MRC member countries with development of approaches, methods and instruments for improved analysis, planning and implementation of natural resources management, their testing in pilot watersheds, and their evaluation as policy options through multi-stakeholder dialogues.

Information and Knowledge Management: The project assists the MRC member countries with the identification and Internet based regional exchange

of experiences relevant for watershed management, which have been made in the MRC member countries themselves, or in comparable regions or situations.

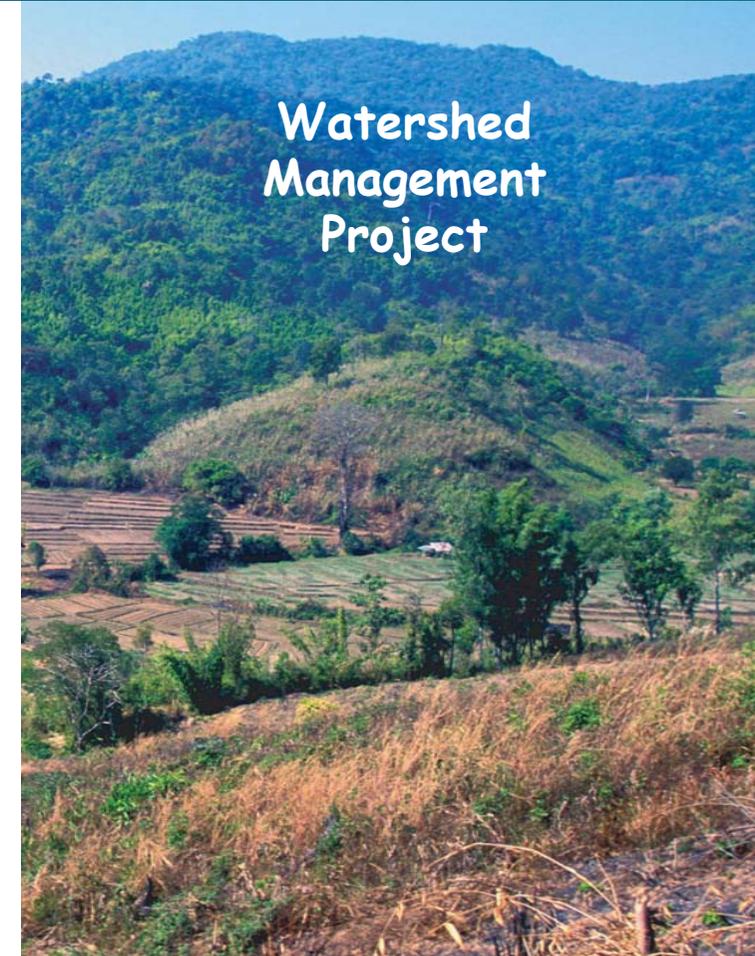
Capacity Building: The project organises a range of capacity building measures (training, workshops, study tours, courses, etc) and associated support activities (training needs identification, quality management, impact monitoring). Capacity building takes place in close cooperation with other German organisations (InWEnt and DED).

The Project Structure

The project supports **National Working Groups on Watershed Management**. Their members are representatives of government line agencies and other organisations mandated with or otherwise involved in issues related to watershed management. A coordination unit within the Agriculture, Irrigation and Forestry Programme of the MRC Secretariat is responsible for overall project management. Country offices have been established in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

The project is supported by the Federal Republic of Germany through GTZ.

Status: November 2006



**Mekong River Commission
For Sustainable Development**

Background

The water and land resources of the Lower Mekong Basin are the basis for the livelihood of about 60 million inhabitants and provide food for some 300 million people.

Agriculture is the most important industry, which relies on the water resources of the Basin, and forestry is a key to the regularity and quality of



water runoff for agriculture. Agriculture contributes to income and provides employment for many people. For many of these people, forestry itself and also fisheries contribute substantially to their livelihood and income.

Activities related to agriculture and forestry are amongst the most significant human influences on

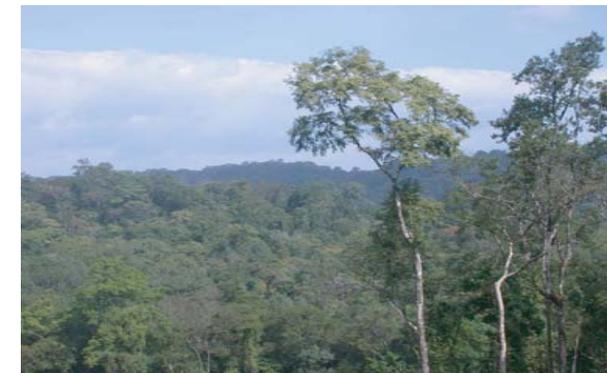
the environment of the Basin, and much of their impact occurs across national borders, requiring a regional approach. The multi-faceted functions of the watersheds call for an integrated and participatory approach throughout the Basin.



Watershed Management - The Concept

The aim of watershed management is to contribute to ensuring a politically and environmentally acceptable quantity and quality of water and its availability over time through management of land and land-related resources.

This implies that the amount of available water should be appropriate and its quality high enough to have no negative effects on the quality of life in the lower areas of the watersheds. This view acknowledges the strong interrelationship between



upstream and downstream interests. The watershed management concept focuses on this interrelationship and provides scenarios and options for sustainable development.

Effective watershed management covers all relevant sectors and is implemented in an interdisciplinary way. Watershed management has to consider the natural resources (land, water, forest) as well as the human resources (households, communities, civil society, government, private sector). It coordinates options for management of natural resources with other options for development in a given watershed area. Thus, watershed management interventions take into account the interests and aspirations of different stakeholders - upstream and downstream - and provide mechanisms of negotiating and achieving consensus between the stakeholders regarding decisions on suitable management options.